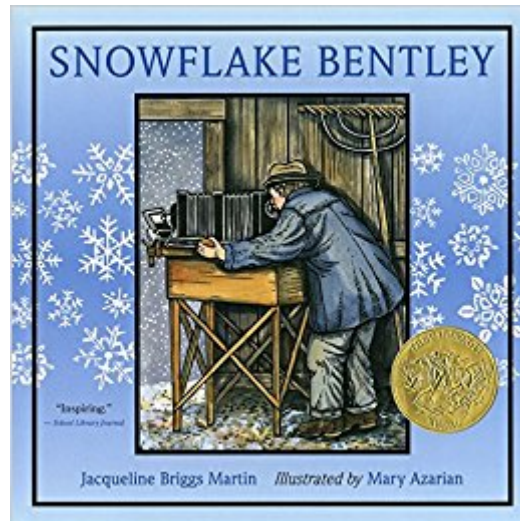




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# Snowflake Bentley



## Synopsis

"Of all the forms of water the tiny six-pointed crystals of ice called snow are incomparably the most beautiful and varied." -- Wilson Bentley (1865-1931) From the time he was a small boy in Vermont, Wilson Bentley saw snowflakes as small miracles. And he determined that one day his camera would capture for others the wonder of the tiny crystal. Bentley's enthusiasm for photographing snowflakes was often misunderstood in his time, but his patience and determination revealed two important truths: no two snowflakes are alike; and each one is startlingly beautiful. His story is gracefully told and brought to life in lovely woodcuts, giving children insight into a soul who had not only a scientist's vision and perseverance but a clear passion for the wonders of nature. Snowflake Bentley won the 1999 Caldecott Medal.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (December 28, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0547248296

ISBN-13: 978-0547248295

Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 158 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #44,246 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Photography #27 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art #28 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Earth Sciences

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Most children are captivated by snow, but how many go on to make it their lifework? This beautiful biography, winner of the 1999 Caldecott Medal, tells the true story of a Vermont farm boy who was mesmerized by snowflakes. Wilson Bentley was fascinated by the six-sided frozen phenomena, and once he acquired a microscope with a camera, his childhood preoccupation took on a more scientific leaning. Bentley spent his life taking countless exquisite photographs (many that are still used in nature photography today), examining the tiny crystals and their delicate, mathematical

structures. Jacqueline Briggs Martin tells this tale with simple, graceful prose that will engage children's imaginations. Edifying and snowflake-scattered sidebars offer more information about Bentley's methods and snowflake science. The artwork of Mary Azarian, whose 19th-century hand-press illustrations decorate the charming *Barn Cat*, shines once again in *Snowflake Bentley*, with woodcuts that reveal an appreciation for detail as well as for the man who loved snow. The lovely illustrations and equally fresh text will inspire and comfort youngsters (and grownups too) who wish they could capture snowflakes all year long. (Ages 4 to 8) --Brangien Davis --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Azarian's (*A Farmer's Alphabet*) handsome woodcuts provide a homespun backdrop to Martin's (*Grandmother Bryant's Pocket*) brief biography of a farmboy born in 1865 on the Vermont snowbelt who never lost his fascination with snowflakes. Wilson A. Bentley spent 50 years pioneering the scientific study of ice crystals, and developed a technique of microphotography that allowed him to capture the hexagonal shapes and prove that no two snowflakes are alike. Martin conveys Bentley's passion in lyrical language ("snow was as beautiful as butterflies, or apple blossoms"), and punctuates her text with frequent sidebars packed with intriguing tidbits of information (though readers may be confused by the two that explain Bentley's solution of how to photograph the snowflakes). Hand-tinted with watercolors and firmly anchored in the rural 19th century, Azarian's woodcuts evoke an era of sleighs and woodstoves, front porches and barn doors, and their bold black lines provide visual contrast to the delicate snowflakes that float airily in the sidebars. A trio of Bentley's ground-breaking black-and-white photographs of snowflakes, along with a picture and quote from him about his love for his work, is the icing that tops off this attractive volume. Ages 4-8. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

When I see a book that has won the Caldecott Medal, I am usually wondering as I go in, what is so special about it? And here, in this case, being slightly unimpressed, it reminds me of the Oscars or the Emmys...what one man says is outstanding might not always be to my (or someone else's) taste. This is a very good book, no doubt about that, written by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and illustrated by Mary Azarian (my favorite parts are the woodcut snowflakes), but it lacks the personal touch, the warmth of the other bio about "Snowflake Bentley" ~ "My Brother Loved Snowflakes," by Mary Bahr and illustrated by Laura Jacobsen. The woodcut illustrations are well-done, but are not as much "fun" as the smooth, wonderfully colorful pastels and stencils of Ms. Jacobsen, and the story

is told more matter-of-factly than the other book. Even tho' I am pleased to have both in my library, having been a huge fan of Mr. Bentley for many years, I would go to the second tome more often than the first, if I were to ever pick them up for light reading...and to introduce my new Grandson to the wonders of Nature, especially the beauty of snow and ice and other microscopic sights. Yes, as I sit and reflect on the fact that one is a so-called award winner and one is not, I have to say that, unlike other critics and "experts," I will continue to trust my own instincts ~ and my own heart.

This is a very well-told, well-selected, and well-paced true story of the man who first photographed snowflakes, devoting his life to them. The illustrations are beautiful and enhance the text. And the way the story is told -- with some information in the main text and additional factual information in sidebars on most of the pages -- works very well: it makes the story multi-layered and very accessible to a wide age group. I found this story so inspiring that I visited the Snowflake Bentley museum in Jericho, Vermont: a worthwhile trip in which I got to see, up close, the photographs and plates as well as Bentley's equipment. Inspiring in all ways: a must read!

Good book but it lobs the attention of my 3 and 5 year old towards the end. Great story and very interesting but wasn't as engaging as I had hoped. I bought it sight unseen because I wanted something new to read with kids for upcoming snow storm. I was hoping there would have been more of Bentley's photographs of snowflakes contained in the book. Beautiful pictures, great story, well written but putting it aside until next year to see if it is more interesting to them then.

I like the book very much. The only problem that I have with it is a hole in the text on two of the pages, about 10/16 x 8/16. I noticed it when I saw part of a sunflower peaking through where text was supposed to be. Five words were affected. It is supposed to be a NEW paperback book. It may be a manufacturing defect because I didn't see the missing piece anywhere. I'm not going to return it - another one could have the same defect if it is a manufacturing problem.

Loved sharing this amazing true story with my 4th grade students!

Exactly what I wanted.

There is something for everyone in this book. It can be difficult to find a non-fiction story, particularly an autobiography, told in a way that will fascinate the very young. This book does just that - but

fascinates the more mature reader as well - including grade school students and adults. The story of Mr. Bentley is told in a very charming way with warm and pleasing pictures, and easy to read and follow text. You could learn quite a bit just by reading the story line. But as an added bonus, there were side bars that added even more historical information - so you could go back and read that yourself if your little one was not quite ready to hear that level of detail. These captions were not intrusive - the way I personally find the Magic School Bus captions to be - but rather side bars that you could read (or not read) at your own discretion. One of the nice things about Mr. Bentley's autobiography - is that you can learn some history, you can learn some science, and you can also simply enjoy the story of a man who was passionate about what he did.

Wonderful non-fiction about "Snowflake" Bentley. He discovered a method for photographing snowflakes. Children relate to the story because it's true. Great for spinning off to science, art or literature extensions.

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